### INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

(PCT Article 36 and Rule 70)

Applicant's or agent's file reference A03-40012/MVM/EOF International application No. PCT/NL 03/00182			FOR FURTHER ACTION  See Notification of Transmittal of International Preliminary Examination Report (Form PCT/IPEA/416)			
			International filing da 11.03.2003	ate (day/month/year)	Priority date (day/month/year) 19.03.2002	
Internation B05B1		nt Classification (IPC) c	or both national classificati	on and IPC		
Applican AIRSP		TERNATIONAL B.	V. et al.			
1. Th	his interr uthority a	national preliminary e and is transmitted to	xamination report has the applicant according	been prepared by this to Article 36.	International Preliminary Examining	
2. Th	his REP	ORT consists of a tot	al of 6 sheets, including	g this cover sheet.		
Ø	beer	amended and are t	panied by ANNEXES, he basis for this report tion 607 of the Adminis	and/or sheets contain	cription, claims and/or drawings which have ing rectifications made before this Authority der the PCT).	
TI	hese anı	nexes consist of a tot	al of 5 sheets.			
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3. TI	his repo	t contains indications	s relating to the following	ng items:		
ı	$\boxtimes$	Basis of the opinion	1	·		
- 11		Priority				
#11		Non-establishment	of opinion with regard	to novelty, inventive s	tep and industrial applicability	
I۷	/ 🗆	Lack of unity of inve	ention			
٧		Reasoned stateme citations and explana	nt under Rule 66.2(a)(i nations supporting sucl	i) with regard to novel n statement	ty, inventive step or industrial applicability;	
V		Certain documents	cited			
V	II 🗆	Certain defects in t	he international applica	ition		
٧		Certain observation	ns on the international a	application		
Date of s	submissio	on of the demand		Date of completion	n of this report	
17.10.2	2003			25.06.2004		
Name a	nd mailin	g address of the interna ining authority:	tional	Authorized Officer	auchas Fairneau	
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International application No.

PCT/NL 03/00182

۱.	<b>Basis</b>	of	the	report
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1. With regard to the **elements** of the international application (Replacement sheets which have been furnished to the receiving Office in response to an invitation under Article 14 are referred to in this report as "originally filed" and are not annexed to this report since they do not contain amendments (Rules 70.16 and 70.17)):

	Des	cription, Pages		
	1-10	)	as originally filed	
	O!-:	- Northern		
	Clai	ms, Numbers		
	1-21		received on 07.06.2004 with letter of 07.06.2004	
	Dra	wings, Sheets		
	1/5-	5/5	as originally filed	
2. With regard to the <b>language</b> , all the elements marked above were available or furnished to this Au language in which the international application was filed, unless otherwise indicated under this item				
	The	se elements were ava	ailable or furnished to this Authority in the following language: , which is:	
		the language of a tra	anslation furnished for the purposes of the international search (under Rule 23.1(b)).	
		the language of publ	lication of the international application (under Rule 48.3(b)).	
		the language of a tra Rule 55.2 and/or 55.	anslation furnished for the purposes of international preliminary examination (under 3).	
3.	With inte	n regard to any <b>nucle</b> rnational preliminary	ectide and/or amino acid sequence disclosed in the international application, the examination was carried out on the basis of the sequence listing:	
		contained in the inte	rnational application in written form.	
		filed together with th	e international application in computer readable form.	
		furnished subsequer	ntly to this Authority in written form.	
		furnished subsequer	ntly to this Authority in computer readable form.	
		The statement that t in the international a	the subsequently furnished written sequence listing does not go beyond the disclosure application as filed has been furnished.	
		The statement that t listing has been furn	the information recorded in computer readable form is identical to the written sequence ished.	
4.	The	e amendments have r	resulted in the cancellation of:	
		the description,	pages:	
		the claims,	Nos.:	
		the drawings,	sheets:	

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5. This report has been established as if (some of) the amendments had not been made, since they have been considered to go beyond the disclosure as filed (Rule 70.2(c)).

(Any replacement sheet containing such amendments must be referred to under item 1 and annexed to this report.)

- 6. Additional observations, if necessary:
- V. Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement
- 1. Statement

Novelty (N)

Yes: Claims 1,3-20
No: Claims 2,21

Inventive step (IS)

Yes: Claims 1,3-20
No: Claims

Industrial applicability (IA)

Yes: Claims 1-20

No:

Claims

2. Citations and explanations

see separate sheet

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### Novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability (Item V)

#### Independent Claim 1

- 1. Independent claim 1 meets the requirements of novelty, inventive step and industrial application according to Articles 33(2) to 33(4) PCT.
- 2. The subject-matter of independent claim 1 is novel as none of the prior art documents cited in the Search Report or acknowledged in the description discloses all of the features of this independent claim.
- 3. The documents cited in the Search Report do not render any suggestion to a skilled person to construct a combination of a first and a second container as disclosed in **EP443519 (D1)** according to the further features of independent claim 1. The features concerning the arrangement of securing collars and coupling members arranged thereon, result from a step being non-obvious in view of the cited prior art documents in which no incentive is given to provide this specific structure and arrangement. Thus the combination of a first and a second container according to independent claim 1 involves an inventive step.

#### Independent claim 2

From (D1) (see column 9, line 9 to column 11, line 56 and figures 3 and 4) there is 4. known a combination of a first container 10 and a second container 30 to form a dispensing unit, which first and second containers 10,30 each have a reservoir 24, 44 for a liquid substance and a pump, which is secured to the reservoir 24,44, can be actuated by hand and has a dispensing opening 16,36 and a pump actuating button 12,32 for dispensing substance from the reservoir 24,44, which combination also comprises coupling means 18,20,26; 38,40,46 for coupling together the first and second containers 10,30 in a position next to one another, the coupling means 18,20,26;38,40,46 comprising one or more first coupling members 18,20, 26, which are each arranged on the first container 10, and one or more second coupling means 38,40,46, which are each arranged on the second container 30 and which can each be directly coupled to an associated first coupling member 18,20,26 on the first container 10, wherein a first coupling member 18,20 and an associated second coupling member 38,40 are each arranged fixedly on the pump-actuating button 12,32 of the associated container 10,30 in order to create a stable coupling between the pump-actuating buttons 12,32 of the two containers

**EXAMINATION REPORT - SEPARATE SHEET** 

10,30 and wherein the dispensing unit further comprises a reservoir holder 26,46 which is designed to at least partly hold the reservoir 24 of the first container 10 and the reservoir 44 of the second container 30.

5. Thus, it appears that the subject-matter of independent claim 2 is not new as required by Article 33(2) PCT.

#### Independent claim 21

6. Independent claim 21 does not provide any technical features that would distinguish the claimed container from any known container. Thus the container of independent claim 21 is not new as required by Article 33(2) PCT.

#### Claims 1 and 2 (Industrial applicability)

7. The subject-matter of independent claims 1 and 2 is able to work and can be manufactured. Thus the subject-matter of claims 1 and 2 is looked upon as being industrially applicable.

#### Dependent claims 3 to 20

8. Dependent claims 3 to 20, when dependent on claim 1, define further advantageous and non-obvious variations of the combination of a first and a second container according to independent claim 1 and thus equally meet the requirements of novelty, inventive step and industrial application according to Articles 33(2) to 33(4) PCT.

### Certain defects in the international application

9. The description does not disclose the invention as claimed (see Rule 5.1a) iii) PCT).

## INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY

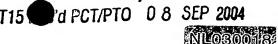
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**EXAMINATION REPORT - SEPARATE SHEET** 

### Certain observations on the international application

#### Independent claim 21

10. Independent claim 21 does not provide any technical features that would define the claimed container. Thus, independent claim 21 contravenes Article 6 PCT in that it is not clear.



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#### AMENDED CLAIMS

0 7. 06. 2004

- A combination of a first container (1) and a container (1') to form a dispensing unit, which first and second 5 containers each have a reservoir (2; 2') for a liquid substance and a pump (3; 3'), which is secured to the reservoir, can be actuated by hand and has a dispensing opening (5; 5') and a pump-actuating button (4; 4'), for dispensing substance from the reservoir, which combination also comprises coupling means (7, 10 8, 17, 18, 11, 13; 7', 8', 17', 18', 11', 13') for coupling together the first and second containers in a position next to one another, the coupling means comprising one or more first coupling members (7, 8, 17, 18, 11, 13) which are each arranged on the first container, and one or more second coupling means 15 (7', 8', 17', 18', 11', 13'), which are each arranged on the second container and which can each be directly coupled to an first coupling member first associated on the characterised in that
- each reservoir has an opening at the top side, in which the pump is secured by means of a securing collar, and in that a first coupling member (7, 8, 17, 18) and associated second coupling member (7', 8', 17', 18') are arranged on the securing collar of the first container and the second container, respectively.

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2. A combination of a first container (101) and a second container (101') to form a dispensing unit, which first and second containers each have a reservoir (102; 102') for a liquid substance and a pump (103; 103'), which is secured to the reservoir, can be actuated by hand and has a dispensing opening and a pump-actuating button (104; 104') for dispensing substance from the reservoir, which combination also comprises coupling means (111; 111') for coupling together the first and second containers in a position next to one another, the coupling means comprising one or more first coupling members (111), which are each arranged on the first container, and one or more second coupling means (111'), which are each arranged on the second and which can each be directly coupled container associated first coupling member on the first container,



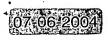
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characterised in that a first coupling member (111) and an associated second coupling member (111') are each arranged fixedly on the pump-actuating button of the associated container in order to create a stable coupling between the pump-actuating buttons of the two containers and that the dispensing unit further comprises a reservoir holder (121) which is designed to at least partially hold the reservoir of the first container and the reservoir of the second container.

- 3. Combination according to claim 1 or 2, in which a first coupling member and an associated second coupling member are each arranged fixedly on the assembly of reservoir and pump of the associated container in order to create a stable coupling between the assemblies of reservoir and pump of the two containers.
  - 4. Combination according to one or more of the claims 1-3, in which a first coupling member and an associated second coupling member are each arranged fixedly on the pump-actuating button of the associated container in order to create a stable coupling between the pump-actuating buttons of the two containers.
- 5. Combination according to one or more of the preceding claims, in which associated first and second coupling members are designed to form an optionally releasable click-fit connection to one another.
- Combination according to claim 5, characterized in that the click-fit connection is an optionally releasable sliding click-30 fit connection.
  - 7. Combination according to one or more of the preceding claims, in which each reservoir has an opening at the top side, in which the pump is secured by means of a securing collar, and in which a first coupling member and associated second coupling member are arranged on the securing collar of the first container and the second container, respectively.



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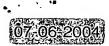
- 8. Combination according to one or more of the preceding claims, in which a pair of first and second coupling members is respectively arranged on the assembly of reservoir and pump of the first and second containers, respectively, in which the coupling members of each pair are complementary with respect to one another and in which the pairs of coupling members are identical to one another.
- 9. Combination according to claims 7 and 8, in which the 10 securing collars of the first and second containers are identical.
- 10. Combination according to one or more of the preceding claims, in which the pump of each container has a dispensing passage which extends through the pump-actuating button.
- 11. Combination according to claim 10, in which the pumpactuating buttons of the first and second containers each have a
  bearing surface for the other pump-actuating button, and in
  which the dispensing passage of each pump-actuating button has a
  dispensing mouth in the vicinity of the bearing surface, so that
  in the coupled position the dispensing mouths lie adjacent to
  one another.
- 25 12. Combination according to one or more of the preceding claims, in which the first and second coupling members are designed to form a coupling which can no longer be released by a user.
- 30 13. Combination according to claims 3 and 4, in which the first and second coupling members are designed to hold the first and second containers at an oblique angle with respect to one another, with the pump-actuating buttons together, and then to couple the containers first of all by means of the coupling members associated with their pump-actuating buttons, and then to pivot the first and second containers towards one another about a hinge which is produced by the coupling members of the pump-actuating buttons, in such a manner that the coupling





members associated with the assembly of reservoir and pump of each of the containers are coupled to one another.

- 14. Dispensing unit comprising the combination of a first 5 container and a second container coupled to it according to one or more of the preceding claims.
- 15. Dispensing unit according to claim 13, which also comprises a reservoir holder which is designed to at least partially hold the reservoir of the first container and the reservoir of the second container.
- 16. Dispensing unit according to claim 14, in which the separate reservoirs can be fixed in the reservoir holder by means of a click-fit connection between the reservoir holder and the respective containers.
- 17. Dispensing unit according to one or more of claims 13 15 in which the dispensing passage in the first container at least partially merges with the dispensing passage in the second container, and in which the dispensing passages have a common dispensing mouth.
- 18. Combination or dispensing unit according to one or more of the preceding claims, in which there is a removable blocking element for blocking at least one of the pump-actuating buttons of the first or second container.
- 19. Combination or dispensing unit according to claim 17, in which a blocking element which can be removed, for example can be broken off, is formed integrally on each securing collar.
- 20. Combination or dispensing unit according to claim 17 or 18, in which the blocking element is a cylindrical clamping element which is substantially U-shaped in cross section and which, when the actuating button is in its highest position, can be clamped around a narrower section of the actuating button.





21. Container for a liquid substance which is clearly intended for a combination or dispensing unit according to one or more of the preceding claims.